1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
AM50 Badaga AM50

615 They are the lowest in the scale, and they are prohibited from intermarrying with the other or high caste Badagas, as long as they are sons to them." The Toreya does the menial duties for the tribe. He is the village servant, carries the corpses to the burning-ground, conveys the news of a death from village to village, is the first to get shaved when a death occurs, and is sent along with a woman when she is going to visit her mother or mother-
[195] in-law at a distance from her own home. "The Udayas, Adhikāris and Kanakas are Lingāyats in religion, and the other three, the Hāruvas, Badagas, and Toreyas are Saivites." Of the six divisions referred to, the Udayas and Toreyas are endogamous, but intermarriage is permissible between the other four. At the census, 1891, a large number of Badagas returned as their sub-division Vakkaliga, which means cultivator, and is the name of the great cultivating caste of Mysore.

113 Seven miles west of Coonoor is a village named
[360] Athikārihatti, or village of the Athikāri or Adhikāri section of the Badagas. "The story goes that these people, under a leader named Karibetta Rāya, came from Sarigūr in Mysore territory, and settled first at Nellituraī (a short distance south-west of Mettupālaiyam) and afterwards at Tūdūr (on the plateau west of Kulakambi) and Tadasimarahatti (to the north-west of Melūr), and that it was they who erected the sculptured
• [172] cromlechs of Tūdūr and Melūr. Tūdūr and Tadasimarahatti are now both deserted; but in the former a cattle kraal, an old shrine, and a pit for fire-walking may still be seen, and in the latter another kraal, and one of the raised stone platforms called mandaikallu by the Badagas. Tradition says that the Badagas left these places and founded Athikārihatti and its hamlets instead, because the Kurumbas round about continually troubled

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

Dravidian scholars have noted its similarity to medieval Kannada; in particular the two forms of *r* in Baḍagu phonology reportedly 'had dropped out of use [i.e., in Kannada literature] prior to the time of the grammarian Késirája, who lived in the thirteenth century'.[6]

Other Historical Evidence

Here a small digression on mining is pertinent. Finds of Roman coinage in burials on the Wainad and Nilgiri Plateaux and in numerous hordes on the Coimbatore Plain suggest that traders with Rome were actively exploiting the gold mines of this area. We find no mention of gold from this region, however, in the (A.D. 100) *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.* That there was indeed a native population in the Nilgiris and Wainad in the first millennium A.D. is indicated by the many cinerary burials of this period on the hilltops; several of these contained Roman coins. There is also a reference in the Tamil classic *Silappadikāram* to the Chera king Seṅguṭṭuvaṉ attending a dance performance at Nilagiri with his army. (*Silappadikāram:* Vañjikaṇḍam, Kālkōṭ Kadai, xxvi, verses 85, 105, 120. See also Breeks, 1973; Grigg, 1880; Das, 1957; Naik, 1966; Hockings, 1975; Noble, 1976.)

Gold workings in the Nilgiri Wainad undoubtedly date back over many centuries:

> There are miles of country where almost every stone has been turned over, hillsides entirely sluiced away, mountain slopes simply honey-combed with shafts, remains of old aqueducts, adits, and bunds. . . . The existing caste of gold workers are the Korumbars, but they confine themselves entirely to alluvial washings. When questioned they tell you of a tradition . . . of hillmen called Vehdahs, . . . by whose hands all these wonderful quarryings were carried out (Sewell, 1882, 224).

The cinerary burials and Wainad gold mines have nothing to do with Badaga history, aside from a possibility that the chieftains of Ummattu:r fortified Nelliala before coming to the Nilgiri Plateau because they were engaged in gold mining thereabouts.

More relevant perhaps are accounts of old workings on the Nilgiris around Ootacamund and Naṉjana:ḍu. Midway between the two places, on One Cairn Hill, there was apparently a

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

medieval town of gold or iron miners, whose mines were protected by a now-disappeared mud fortress. Traces of their town stretch for nearly a kilometer.[7] Badaga traditions do not mention this mining activity, and there is no basis for supposing Badagas initially occupied the hills as prospectors or mine-slaves. If such old quarries (which might even be Roman) have any relevance at all to Badaga history, it can only be because the Ummattu:r chieftains may have turned their eyes towards the Nilgiris in search of the gold that it was rumoured could be found there. In recent times there has been no gold mining in the district, except in the Wainad during the feverish speculation of 1879 1882. (Francis, 1908, 16–19; for other references, see Hockings, 1975, 49–50; 1978, 43–47).

While archaeology is of no assistance, kinship provides a rough guide to the antiquity of the Badaga community. The Gauda headman of Tu:ne:ri, paramount chief of the Badagas, can name nineteen generations of forefathers. His was probably the first village founded (Francis, 1908, 364), and as seventeen of the headmen were resident there the antiquity of Tu:ne:ri must go back to the early seventeenth century if we allow twenty years per generation.[8]

Another line of argument is that all Hindu Badagas are Shaivites (including those who are Virashaivas), whereas in southern Mysore there is now a large minority of Vaishnavites. That sect had its inception there with the conversion of the Mysore kings to Vaishnavism around 1610, which suggests that the Badagas were already in the Nilgiris by that date and so not affected in the way that lowland communities were (Grigg, 1880, 218; Macleane, 1893, 64; Wilks, 1930, vol. I, 52). That some if not all were indeed in the hills was confirmed by Finicio (1603).[9]

It has been argued that the respect shown to Badagas by the Todas and Kotas, for example in customary salutations, indicates that they had entered the Nilgiris while the Mysore kings were still in the ascendancy and had some territorial claims over the Nilgiris (Grigg, 1880, 218; see below, 112). The Be:da phratry, who arrived rather more recently as huntsmen and tax collectors in the retinue of the chieftain of Ummattu:r, 'still call the Mysore chiefs ... their Kartas or lords' (Grigg, 1880, 268–269, quoting Metz, 1864). Such an argument does not accord with the widespread tale of flight from Moslem oppressors, which depicts some Badagas initially coming to the Nilgiri tribes with caps in hand:

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

As a result of this political situation the plateau became involved in a long military struggle mainly for control of tribute collection from the Badagas. Tribute was then levied mostly in the form of grain, which Todas did not produce and which Kotas had scarcely any of. This struggle, sometimes between Moslems and Hindus, prompted the construction or capture of certain fortresses, both to terrorize the Badagas and to guard the passes around the foot of and up into the Nilgiris. The extraordinary visibility, even as far as Seringapatam, allowed commanders of the hill garrisons to detect obvious military manoeuvres in the plains and often guided them to cross the plateau and cut the enemy troops off as they came round the foot of its escarpments.

As an example of such movements a Kota historian has described how Haidar Ali attacked the 'king of Madurai', Virapandya Devan, in Dannaika Ko:ṭe in 1759 but was forced to retreat. The 'king' then sent an army into the Nilgiris to suppress Haidar's hill forts there, and this resulted in a battle at the commune of Tu:ḍu:ru (1760) in which Virapandya lost three thousand troops and Haidar emerged victorious to capture Dannaika Ko:ṭe for himself, while the beaten troops fled to Salem District.[31] Tu:ḍu:ru has since been deserted, the remnants of its nineteen-village population having settled in the nearby village of Ko:ḍe:ru.

It was during the sixteenth or seventeenth century that two important fortresses were erected, Male Ko:ṭe on the northern rim of the plateau and Hatra Ko:ṭe on the east side (reputedly founded in 1578). A third fort, Pakkasu:ra Ko:ṭe, had been built somewhat earlier on the Hulikal Drug mountain-top, to the south-east (Harkness, 1832, 107; Francis, 1908, 329. See Map 2 above, 24–25). Tradition has it that an Ummattu:r chieftain established altogether nine fortified settlements in the area, and the ruins of the remaining half-dozen are indeed still to be seen below the slopes—for example, at Ma:vanhaḷḷa; also he encouraged 350 Badaga families to migrate into the hills, doubtless scattering them in every village. (Belli Gowder, 1923–1941, 104, and 1938–1941, 8). The Kotas still recall how Umat Arč (the Lord of Ummattu:r) and Udr Arč (the Lord Udaiya Raya) came to Ke:ti 'to collect the revenue money and built houses and lived there with wife and children' (Emeneau, 1946, 259). In Badaga tradition Bijjanarasu, son of the Ummattu:r chieftain, possibly founded Ke:ti and there collected an annual tribute of five hundred gold coins from all of Me:kuna:du.

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

fully with the partner. Some non-vegetarians do make a medicine for infertility from the eye of the crow-pheasant (*Centropus sinensis parroti*).

6.63. Badagas rarely offer *pu:ja* at a local temple nowadays in order to obtain children, but in the last century they often did so. Worship of the phallic *linga* symbol associated with Siva was considered very efficacious, particularly in those rare cases where it happened to be a prehistoric axe-head that had "miraculously appeared" in a field during ploughing. The Badaga ancestress deity Hette was also commonly resorted to for the same reason (Jagor 1876 : 199-200). Today it is usual for a couple with no children to make a pilgrimage to some important temple in the South Indian plains, where they make oaths to various gods, promising them goats, coconuts or idol ornaments once they have satisfied the supplicants' need for a child. It is no light matter for a man in an undivided joint family to take such an oath, because of the rules that it entails: in order to fulfil his promise after the birth of a child, the man must consult his family as to when that can be done. The problem is that (*a*) these oaths are normally fulfilled after a birth, but only on a festival day if they were taken in a *Badaga* temple: (*b*) they must not be fulfilled while *any* woman in the joint family is pregnant ; and yet (*c*) they must be fulfiled within twelve years of the requested birth. If this last rule is disregarded the offended god may visit another misfortune on the family; and so, even in a nuclear family, a man will try to discharge his obligation to the deity well before the twelve years following the birth, just in case his wife should happen to be pregnant again during the festivals of that final year. A further rule (*d*) is that if a man has promised the hair of his child to a deity, and if he waits for several years to make good his promise, then he must at the same time

574 615 they will only be offered vegetarian food in the inner room. Usually it is only between two families related through a marriage that this latter situation might arise. Generally the vegetarians do not eat in non-vegetarian homes. Toreyas may be given food in the outer room of a Gauda house, but meat-eating Adikaris will eat in the inner room.

162 615 Few Badagas know of the existence of a Badaga phratry called Kumbara, so small are its numbers. The Kumbaras live in two nearby hamlets on the northern edge of the Nilgiris (Metz 1864: 60), and total only 50 households -- about 300 people. The two hamlets are two exogamous sibs, and where possible intermarry. 614 615 One of these hamlets, however, contains only ten families; so that the other hamlet [582] has to look elsewhere for most of its spouses. They do not intermarry with any other Badagas, but do arrange marriages with any of the several thousand families 615 of Kanarese Kumbaras who live in and around Mysore City. Although these latter are not Badagas the Kumbaras of the Nilgiris believe that the two groups have common ancestry. Those living in the Nilgiris nevertheless class themselves as Badagas, are recognized as such by their neighbors, and carry a distinctively Badaga culture almost identical with that of the Gaudas. Many Badagas who know of their existence believe that the Kumbaras actually are Gaudas.

172 615 Within a half-mile of one of the hamlets is a deserted fortification, said to have been constructed several centuries ago by the Raja of Ummattur, a town of southern Mysore (Francis 1908: 350). Badaga folksongs indicate that the Kumbaras came into the hills in this Raja's retinue. The traditional occupation of their caste is ceramics, and although they no longer know how to make pots there are any number of broken sherds stratified at a depth of 2-3 meters in the ramparts of the old 186 615 fortification to testify to their former industry on this spot. On the basis of this

137 318 (241) have utilized wood for the same purposes as Todas. Some abandoned agricultural tracts are now covered by grass, while others are covered by shrubs or tree growth. Annual firings and grazing play vital roles in grassland formation and maintenance. Examples of rapid forest removal leading to grassland formation are offered by clearings presently formed by Badagas near Toda hamlets. After trees are axed down (241) and disposed of, potatoes are cultivated. As cultivation continues, surviving scattered trees are slowly cut out. If after a few years cultivation is suspended due to soil deterioration or non-renewal of a contract with Todas, the once cultivated plots may rapidly become grass covered (Plate IV; D, E, and F). New grassland formation and maintenance result from buffaloes grazing on grasses which have sprung up over the plots, coupled in many cases with periodic burning of the grasses.

• 172 Megalithic Cult members once living on the upper Nilgiris may have been farmers and livestock rearers. The question of whether Megalithic monuments were erected before or after ancestral Todas came to the upper Nilgiris remains unanswered. Apart from fragments of numerous pottery buffaloes in Megalithic sites, there is little conjectural association between the monument builders and Todas - unless ancestral Todas are assumed to have been bronze-iron age warriors whose descendents abandoned warfare and turned to herding only buffaloes. Construction dates for Nilgiri Megalithic sites have not been established, but may tentatively be related to a period covering a few centuries before and after 1 A.D.[9] On lids of funerary urns buried within stone circles on mountain tops (Plate V, A), figures resembling horses,

172 humped cattle, buffaloes, sheep, dogs, and chickens were fashioned with clay. The funerary urns are sophisticated in design, and other buried pottery was often more elaborately made than the pottery presently used on the Nilgiris. Bronzeware from the stone circles varies greatly in shape and is in some instances intricately decorated. Iron objects found in Megalithic sites range from broad-bladed daggers, chopping knives, sickles, razors, long and short spear points, and arrow points, to small lamps (Breeks 1873: Plates XXXVI-XLIII). The artifactual evidence, therefore, indicates that Megalithic Cult members may have cleared forests for agriculture and to obtain wood for domestic necessities. Livestock were possibly grazed on annually burned grasslands derived from cleared lands and natural openings in the forest. In this connection it may be noted that many Megalithic sites are located on peaks within the northern grasslands and near valleys in which agriculture is presently continued.

139 Recent reforestation of the temperate grasslands. The question as to whether or not upper Nilgiri grasslands may be reforested has been partly answered. It is certain that most of these grasslands could be rapidly covered by acacia and eucalyptus trees. Thousands of former grassland acres have already been planted with these trees, imported from Australia (Plate V, B and C). The clearest historic record of vegetational change through imported tree growth is offered (175) by Ootacamund, the largest city in the Nilgiris. Eight views drawn or painted in the 1830s clearly reveal that the area was then covered by grassland and scattered sholas (Jervis 1834: illustration opposite

NOTES

[1]The trend had started by 1905 (Rivers 1906: 23-24).

[2]A Toda green funeral ends with the deceased's cremation. Relics of the deceased, such as hair and portions of the skull, are kept for the second dry funeral. Ritual performed over the relics in a dry funeral resembles ritual used in the green funeral, and the relics are finally burned in an azaram. Kotas also have green and dry funerals. In contrast to Todas, the dry funeral honors all who have died during a year. Thus, on a set date, funeral ritual is performed over the relics of Kota community members who have died since the last dry funeral.

[3]For convenience, the terms used by Rivers (1906) are adhered to in this section pertaining to Todas. For information regarding ritual and uses of the two fireplaces in the Mŏdr dairy-temple, see Rivers 1906: 91-92.

[4]Wrestling with bulls on pastoral tracts in the sixth century A.D. is described in the Tamilian work, Mullaikkali. The sporting bulls varied from the wild gaur, or a close relative, to a fully domesticated bull with white spots on brown skin. That the sport was dangerous is emphasized by the fact that eventually the bulls' horns became "red with blood and had guts winding around them." As "the son of the buffalo-herd" is also mentioned, the same people were probably herding buffaloes (Iyengar 1929: 578-580).

[5]The Rao Phasé Pardi tribesmen of Maharashtra still employ cattle and cloth screens to approach game (Kosambi 1967: 104).

[6]This data was obtained from Kvodron, Seventh Day Adventist Mission, Coonoor, 1965.

[7]Murray B. Emeneau has written about Christian Todas who turned to agriculture (Emeneau 1939: 93-106). For information concerning agriculture near Toda hamlets, the writer is indebted to Anthony Walker.

[8]In 1865 a hunter described a fight to the finish between a gaur and tiger near a camp located by the small Upper Bhavani Stream on the upper Nilgiris. The hunter's friend shot two gaurs near the fight location (Old Shekarry 1865: 241, 252-257).

[9]The tentative period is based upon an approximate period established through archeological work conducted by Sir Mortimer Wheeler and artifactual finds (Wheeler 1959: 162-163).